

Promising Practice: Healthcare Workforce Development Employer Engagement Workshops

Cankdeska Cikana Community College

The Next Steps Project

Healthcare workforce development workshops are a promising collaborative strategy of the Cankdeska Cikana Community College's Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. The workshops support program sustainability through direct employer engagement.

The school's job development specialist, the state's U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship, and a paid seminar facilitator present a healthcare workforce development workshop at eight locations across the state over a 10-week period. The four-hour workshop is free to all potential employers. Many are sent letters of introduction with an informational brochure, but any healthcare employer may register by contacting the consultant. The program features proven and effective strategies for diversifying, attracting, developing and retaining a high-quality healthcare workforce.

The first agenda item following the college representative's welcome and introduction of the consultant is a group activity to identify jobs for which it is especially hard to hire and retain people. Turnover cost computation is followed by an assessment of why people leave their jobs. Noting the dissatisfaction implicit in quitting provides the facilitator with a natural transition into the more optimistic topic of what people look for in their jobs or careers. Then the consultant relinquishes the stage to the apprenticeship representative, who explains how the programs work in general and gives specific examples of apprenticeship programs in healthcare.

After lunch, the college's specialist discusses healthcare employment by county and demographic. The pathways available to those wanting employment in the healthcare industry are presented next, followed by a group activity to identify jobs for which registered apprenticeships may be helpful. In closing, participants are asked if they want to meet with someone to work with them as they evaluate their workforce development program or explore the options discussed in the workshop.

This promising practice promotes program sustainability through employer engagement. A college program giving collaborative presentations statewide to prospective employers in a growth industry has the potential to create a self-perpetuating cycle of success. The probability of higher program completion rates and subsequent employment retention is increased because employer engagement will help keep the curriculums relevant to the healthcare workforce challenges. Employers happy with their hires are more likely to help provide opportunities for program enhancements like apprenticeships.

Promising Practice: Mentoring Model Cankdeska Cikana Community College

Cankdeska Cikana Community College has partnered with the RAIN (Recruitment /Retention of American Indians into Nursing) program from the University of North Dakota College of Nursing to provide support for its HPOG participants. The RAIN program is recognized for its support strategies to recruit and retain nursing students. The RAIN mentoring model is designed to address concerns, issues, and the needs of each individual student so that an educational plan can be developed.

A crucial part of the mentoring model is RAIN's essential advisement strategy. All students enrolled in the program are assigned to one of two advisors. Barb Anderson, the RAIN program assistant coordinator, is the pre-nursing student advisor, and Deb Wilson, the RAIN program coordinator, is the nursing student advisor. All new participants in the RAIN program complete enrollment interviews with their advisors. Assessment tools are utilized to determine specific individual needs and develop a plan for each student's success. There are regular meetings with mentors and continuous monitoring of academic progress. Students meet with their advisors each semester to review current status and ensure continuous progress towards graduation.

The mentoring model has a nurse mentor, and student tutors are available. The nurse mentor is available to both undergraduate and graduate nursing students, advising prospective students, reviewing individual academic records, and providing individual academic and career advisement. The nurse mentor assists students in setting up study groups and works with students individually or as a group, reviewing their papers for nursing content and assisting them with practicing nursing skills and procedures. The nurse mentor also helps students to organize their syllabi, review their ATI (Assessment and Technologies, Inc.) test scores, develop study strategies, and set up review sessions for the NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examinations-RN or LN) exam. The mentor assists students with scholarly communication skills, teaches role-playing for presentations, and serves as a liaison between faculty and students.

This mentoring model can be replicated or adopted by other grantees that have nursing students in the career ladder and people available to serve as mentors and tutors. It can help the HPOG program to track the success rates of the students and improve program outcomes. HPOG grantees can adopt the practice by implementing the following steps:

1. Consider the instructors who are assigned as academic advisors at the institution of higher learning or community college to be part of the mentoring team.
2. Recruit nursing students in the career ladder to serve as mentors and tutors.
3. Build mentor compensation into the budget, or use academic work study students to serve as mentors.
4. Meet with students and advisors on a regular basis to track student success and monitor program outcomes.